

While there is a Spirit in infinite energy through the universe, why have the few particles of dust which enclose *our* spirits the power to intercept all sensible communication with him, and to place them as in a vacuity, where the sovereign Essence had been precluded or extinguished?

The reverential submission, with which you contemplate the mystery of omnipotent benevolence forbearing to exert the agency which could assume an instantaneous ascendancy in every mind over the causes of depravation and ruin, will not avert your compassion from the unhappy persons who are practically "without God in the world." And if your intellect could be enlarged to a capacity for comprehending the whole measure and depth of disaster contained in this exclusion, (an exclusion under which a human being having the full and fearful truth of his situation revealed to him would behold, as relatively to *his* happiness, the whole resources of the creation sunk as into dust and ashes, and all the causes of joy and hope reduced to insipidity and lost in despair,) you would feel a distressing emotion at each recital of a life in which religion had no share; and you would be tempted to wish that some spirit from the other world, empowered with an eloquence that might threaten to alarm the slumbers of the dead, would throw himself in the way of this one mortal, and this one more, to protest, in sentences of lightning and thunder, against the infatuation that can at once acknowledge there is a God, and be content to forego every connection with him, but that of danger. You would wish they should rather be assailed by the "terror of the Lord," in whatever were its most appalling form, than retain the satisfaction of carelessness till the day of his mercy be past.

But you will need no such enlargement of comprehension, in order to compassionate the situation of persons who, with reason sound to think, and hearts not strangers to feeling, have advanced far into life, perhaps near to its close, without having felt the influence of religion. If there is such a Being as we mean by the term God, the ordinary intelligence of a serious mind will be quite enough to see that it must be a melancholy thing to pass through life, and quit it, just as if there were not. And sometimes it will appear as strange as it is melancholy; especially to a person who has been pious from his youth. He would be inclined to say.